

May 27, 1960

Dr. Charles Phillips
Division of Physical Defense
Fort Detrick
Frederick, Maryland

Dear Charlie:

I'm sorry to have been so backward about keeping in touch with you. I really was very much interested to get the manuscript of your paper at the SAB and the diagram of the particrome. It is pretty obvious that our objectives in exobiology overlap many of the technical requirements of terrestrial early warning and I would welcome any opportunity to discuss this with you more fully. As to the particrome I'm afraid I did not find the blueprint drawing terribly helpful as it is rather difficult to read all the details into the plan. I rather jokingly suggested to some of the fellows at the Naval Biological Research Laboratory that they acquire a working model and this may, in fact, eventuate. It seems to me that you would have the same interest in converting to ultraviolet optics as we would with much the same coincidence feature to detect just objects which absorb in the ultraviolet and not in the visible. We are looking forward to getting some new Zeiss optics that should greatly simplify the job of setting up for ultraviolet microscopy. Meanwhile for your problem don't you think it would be as feasible to look for ultraviolet absorbing material, filtered from the atmosphere, taken up in solution in a micro-absorption cell? A good deal of air could be scrubbed through a circulating, fairly small volume of liquid.

I particularly wanted to ask you if you could come out to the next meeting of the exobiology committee of the Space Science Board. This will be at Arcadia, near Pasadena, California on June 25th. George Derbyshire at the Board Secretariat can give you further details. If your NASA contract does not provide for this kind of travel, I assume that the Board would pick up the tab but I suggest that you do confirm this with George. I know that the committee would be quite keen to hear how the decontamination studies are going and in addition we might discuss some other aspects of the problem of microbial detection. I hope we are not asking you too late to let

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you fit this into your plans.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

P.S. Did you remark that you were sending your paper to Science?
My own paper on exobiology is going there too. I don't know what
the order of publication is nor do I think it matters a great deal.

CC: Derbyshire